

University Diversity Strategic Planning Assessment Survey Report

Executive Summary



RUTGERS

University Equity and Inclusion

Background

In January 2021, the University Equity and Inclusion (UEI) office launched the diversity strategic planning process as a mechanism to assess where we are and commit to what we will do to chart a more inclusive path forward at Rutgers. All members of the university community were invited to complete the Diversity Strategic Planning Assessment Survey to inform both university and Chancellor-led unit planning. The survey enabled targeted feedback by Chancellor-led unit (Rutgers–New Brunswick, Rutgers–Newark, Rutgers–Camden, and Rutgers Biomedical Health Sciences) and by population (undergraduate students, graduate students, staff, postdoctoral trainees/learners, and faculty). The full survey is available in the diversity strategic planning toolkit.

THEMATIC OVERVIEW

All survey respondents were asked to reflect, within their organizational unit (school, division, or administrative department), on the thematic areas below drawn from the university’s diversity priorities.

- University Vision, Leadership and Messaging about Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion
- Efforts to Engage in Sustainable and Substantive Community Engagement
- Efforts to Recruit, Retain, and Develop a Diverse Community
- The Role of Leaders in Shaping Inclusive Environments
- Existence of Institutional Infrastructure Needed to Drive Change

Undergraduate and graduate students as well as postdoctoral trainees and faculty were also asked to reflect on efforts to promote inclusive scholarship and teaching (students, postdocs, faculty). Staff were also asked to reflect on efforts to promote an inclusive workforce.

DEMOGRAPHIC OVERVIEW

The survey was a mechanism for stakeholder engagement and not a census of the university community, so a limited set of demographic questions were asked. Our aim was to ascertain whether there were observable differences in the experience of racial/ethnic minority groups compared to the overall population in perceptions of where the university is currently and what needs to change.

A total of 5,058 people, including undergraduate students, graduate students, postdoctoral trainees/learners, staff, and faculty, participated in the survey. Table 1 provides a demographic summary of the survey respondents by Chancellor-led unit. Women far outpaced those that identified as men or genderqueer/another gender in survey completion. A sizable proportion of survey respondents identify as racial/ethnic minorities. There is wide variation in years at Rutgers and the majority of respondents by role varies by Chancellor-led unit.

¹ Due to a skip-logic error several questions in the survey that should have been asked of only faculty and staff were answered by all respondents, in another case faculty were excluded from a pertinent question (i.e., the recruitment of and outreach to diverse faculty and staff).

² Due to a small number of postdoctoral learners/trainee respondents, we are unable to provide summary findings. For purposes of inclusion, this report collapses these respondents into the staff category.

TABLE 1: RESPONDENT DEMOGRAPHIC SUMMARY BY CHANCELLOR-LED UNIT

		RBHS	CAMDEN	NEWARK	NEW BRUNSWICK	CENTRAL AD-MIN
ROLE	Staff/Postgraduate Trainee	208	79	144	1039	306
	Faculty	252	33	134	878	18
	Undergraduates	17	84	36	933	0
	Graduate Students	39	23	65	484	0
GENDER	Woman	356	146	238	2019	188
	Genderqueer/ Another Gender	<10	<10	11	107	<10
	Man	154	62	130	1203	134
RACE	Black/Latinx/ Indigenous	134	59	145	662	64
	Asian/Asian American	99	28	55	682	31
YEARS AT RUTGERS	16+ years	180	29	90	768	117
	11 to 15 years	61	19	66	263	38
	8 to 10 years	39	20	33	255	45
	5 to 7 years	72	16	41	386	52
	3 to 4 years	66	61	56	638	39
	1 to 2 years	94	70	86	991	33

DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS OVERVIEW

We used Qualtrics (a web-based survey platform) to distribute the survey. The survey was available for approximately 6 weeks from late January to mid-March 2021. Administrative procedures were maintained to ensure the confidentiality of survey takers; if a category consisted of less than 10 respondents, it was excluded from this report.

Percentages throughout the report are calculated based on the number of respondents who selected one of the following options: Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, Strongly Disagree. Percentages are rounded to the nearest whole number. “Not applicable-N/A” and “Don’t Know” responses are excluded from the report.

The headings in this report reflect the populations who answered these survey questions, when the universe of respondents is limited. If no population is noted, the graphical results reflect all survey respondents. Respondents who selected more than one gender category are assigned to the “another gender” category.

Key Findings

1. RUTGERS' VISION FOR DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION IS CLEAR.

- Overall, more than three-quarters of survey respondents (undergraduate students, graduate students, postdoctoral trainees/learners, staff, and faculty) agree that Rutgers is committed to diversity, equity, inclusion (DEI) and has a clear vision/mission that is reflected in university communications.
 - However, respondents who identify as Black, Latinx/o/a, and/or Indigenous as well as those who identify as genderqueer (another gender) are more critical of both the university's DEI commitment and messaging.
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2. THERE IS ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT IN THE UNIVERSITY'S ENGAGEMENT OF THE COMMUNITY AND RECOGNITION/REWARDS OF FACULTY AND STAFF WHO DO SO

- Rutgers-Camden followed by Rutgers-Newark faculty, students and staff provide the most positive evaluations of community engagement, including opportunities for students to engage in community-based learning and curriculum and the structures in place to strengthen relationships with the local community.
 - Nearly half of faculty across the University are critical of recognition and rewards for community-based research as well as the structures to strengthen community relationships.
 - More than one-third of Black, Latinx/o/a, and Indigenous respondents rate community-engaged opportunities and research poorly.
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3. MIXED PERCEPTIONS OF EFFORTS TO RECRUIT A DIVERSE COMMUNITY.

- About two-thirds of staff, graduate students and undergraduate students agree Rutgers uses best practices for the inclusive hiring of faculty and staff. A sizable percentage disagree, however. Among undergraduates, for example, about a quarter of Black, Latinx/o/a, and Indigenous respondents are critical of efforts.
 - Perceptions of efforts to recruit a diverse undergraduate community are more uniformly positive, with about 80 to 85 percent of undergraduate students and staff agreeing that Rutgers actively values and seeks to enroll diverse undergraduate students.
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4. LEADERS NEED TO BUILD CAPACITY TO CREATE INCLUSIVE ENVIRONMENTS.

- Staff are critical of leadership's attention to the differing needs of students/staff/faculty, nearly a quarter disagree that leaders consistently work to provide support and meet the needs of staff.
- Another gender and women respondents rate leadership more poorly than men across all leadership measures.
- Undergraduate students have the most favorable perceptions of leaders' role in shaping inclusive environments, followed by graduate students, then staff and finally faculty, who are the most critical of their organizational unit's leaders.
- Nearly 30 percent of respondents across the board disagree that leaders have the cross-cultural skills to address issues of insensitivity, exclusion, or disrespect when they arise.

5. LACK OF RECOGNITION AND REWARDS FOR DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION CONTRIBUTIONS.

- About half of the faculty surveyed disagree that faculty and staff members' DEI contributions are recognized and rewarded.
 - Staff have more favorable perceptions of the recognition and rewards given to faculty for DEI efforts than for themselves.
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6. LACK OF INFRASTRUCTURE WILL BE AN IMPEDIMENT TO CHANGE.

- Undergraduates are the most positive in their evaluations of infrastructure; faculty and staff are the most critical.
- One-third to half of faculty and staff disagree that their respective organizational units have the infrastructure to drive inclusive and equitable change. There is widespread recognition that we do not regularly and systematically collect and analyze data about equity, inclusion, and diversity.

QUICK TAKES:

- More opportunities to learn about DEI topics and promote cultural growth are needed.
- Graduate students are critical of the mentoring systems that support them academically and professionally.
- Faculty are critical of efforts to promote inclusive scholarship and teaching.
- Black, Latinx/o/a and Indigenous respondents are consistently more critical of the university than Asian/Asian American respondents.
- Another gender respondents tend to be more critical than women or men.

University Narrative Response Summary

The survey contained one open-ended question which said, “Please share any additional information you would like us to know that is not captured above.” A relatively small percentage of respondents provided narrative responses across the university, though the rate varied unit – about 4 percent (New Brunswick), 5 percent (Camden), 10 percent (central administration) and 17 percent (Newark and RBHS). The responses touched on several themes, many of which relate to the thematic areas and recommendations from the University Equity Audit. We provide a high-level summary of the responses below.

DIVERSITY STRATEGIC PLANNING

Taken from University Equity Audit

- Develop a clear vision, guided by strong goals and core values to signal an investment in long-term culture change.
- Provide a means to integrate diversity, equity, and inclusion into all aspects of our institutional life, including but not limited to the way Rutgers recruits, hires, trains, rewards, socializes, promotes, disciplines, and envisions and articulates our mission and values.

HIRING AND PROMOTION – STAFF

- Review administrative policies, practices, procedures, etc. to attract and retain a diverse workforce, including those in leadership positions.
- Review the resources available to support staff with disabilities and promote them to enhance awareness.
- Review promotion policies to facilitate the recognition and reward of internal talent; there is a perception that the current pay increase cap can lead to undervaluing existing staff.
- Continue to work towards greater staff cohesion and harmony post-integration with UMDNJ.
- Expand opportunities for staff inclusion in and contribution to university affairs in ways that are equitable to those provided to faculty and students.
- Introduce population-specific affinity groups to help foster community.
- Address pay equity concerns.

HIRING AND PROMOTION – FACULTY

- Review administrative policies, practices, procedures, etc. to attract and retain a diverse workforce, including those in leadership positions.
- Recognize the disproportionate responsibility faculty of color often bear for diversity and inclusion, from service work to student support. Expand vehicles for recognition and reward, including valuing this labor in the tenure and promotion process.
- Expand recognition for, and promotion of, civically engaged/community-based scholarship, service, teaching, and outreach, especially in the tenure/promotion process.
- Consider utilizing diversity, inclusion, and equity metrics within funding structures for research and scholarship.
- Expand retention efforts to sustain a diverse faculty.
- Address pay equity concerns.

STUDENT RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION

- Promote greater attention to nuance within and across the experiences and needs of underrepresented groups within student recruitment.
- Expand efforts that attend to how diversity, inclusion and culture facilitate or hinder academic success.
- Provide more structure for mentoring and advising of undergraduate and graduate students.
- Increase multi-year support and provide additional recognition of programs/academic departments that engage in mentoring/advising for historically underrepresented groups.
- Increase support for nurturing diversity, equity, and inclusion among graduate students, incorporating the needs of students from nontraditional backgrounds.
- Provide more support for preparing undergraduate students for graduate school.
- Encourage faculty to spend time supporting and mentoring students and/or involve them in their research, especially for URM and first-generation students.
- Provide support to better enable faculty, staff and students to transition into the complexity of Rutgers university life. Lack of understanding and limited support when entering the university can hinder academic success for students as well as limit the ability of faculty and staff to support them.

DEVELOP AN INSTITUTIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE TO DRIVE CHANGE

- Develop a diversity dashboard that is easy to understand, presenting statistics in an engaged way, such as graphs and pie charts.
- Increase transparency and availability of data and reporting related to diversity, inclusion, and equity.
- Work towards greater cohesion and alignment of DEI efforts and initiatives.
- Examine and update unit-based policies, procedures, and guidelines that may function to undermine DEI initiatives for growing the number and success of scholars (faculty and students) from underrepresented groups.
- Delve deeper to understand potential barriers to DEI at the department level and provide greater support, financial and otherwise, for efforts to address any barriers.
- Review equity in building infrastructure across Rutgers chancellor-led units.

ACCOUNTABILITY FOR PROGRESS

- Increase accountability for leadership enactment of diversity, inclusion, and equity as an institutional value.
- Develop mechanisms for institutional accountability to support diversity, equity, and inclusion goals.
- Commit to the highest standards for DEI and hold leadership accountable for openly and proactively seeking to understand where they fail to achieve diversity, equity, and inclusion objectives.
- Routinely recognize DEI contributions and individuals who exemplify strong DEI values in their actions and behaviors, especially those who act beyond the confines of their position to improve organizational diversity, equity, and inclusion outcomes.
- Create accountability systems for managers to recruit diverse talent.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

- Expand efforts to develop and recruit workers in the underrepresented communities that are adjacent to our campuses.
- Expand active community outreach to recruit a diverse population of students, faculty and staff.
- Expand meaningful engagement of alumni and donors of color.
- Expand efforts to build and sustain relationships with K-12 educators.
- Recognize and reward efforts to engage in civic/community-engaged scholarship and teaching.
- Increase support for faculty to integrate civic/community engagement into their teaching.
- Include climate-preparedness as an equity issue; it should be an area of focused partnership with the communities surrounding our campuses.

PROMOTE AND EXPAND ACCESS TO DIVERSITY EDUCATION

- Demonstrate a clear commitment to including a range of experiences within the diversity framework, extending beyond race (often seen as emphasizing Black/White) and gender to include socioeconomic backgrounds, disability, religion, age, gender identity, sexuality, international status, English as an additional language, and a range of ideological and political positions.
- Equip community members with the capacity to engage in productive dialogue with people who have varying perspectives, especially those with whom they disagree.
- Expand education and skill-building for leadership to move from good intentions to good practice.
- Better communicate existing opportunities for diversity education and capacity building within Rutgers University.
- Provide greater support and opportunities for academic/administrative departments to participate in DEI trainings.
- Expand curricular offerings that promote cultural diversity and understanding, as well as those that enable public engagement.

ADMINISTRATIVE CULTURE

- Develop robust listening strategies that invite feedback, assure anonymity/confidentiality, and build trust in the process.
- Promote a mutual culture of respect, and voice in decision making, regardless of credentials and position.
- Communicate diversity, inclusion, and equity as core values of institutional life, as expectations for practice, and as strengths of organizational culture.
- Articulate diversity, inclusion, and equity as core values of institutional life beyond moments of heightened national awareness, develop it as an area of strength in our organizational culture.
- Promote a more inclusive and welcoming climate for diverse voices and ideologies.